

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9075

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SUBJ: RECOMMENDATIONS OF REPROGRAMMING WORKING GROUP

REF: STATE 272399

1. EMBASSY FULLY SUPPORTS ENDEAVORS OF THE PRIORITIES POLICY GROUP TO SORT OUT LOWER PRIORITY POSITIONS, AND MISSION WILL COOPERATE TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, CONSISTENT WITH CARRYING OUT OUR POLICY OBJECTIVES IN ISRAEL. EMBASSY HAS FOLLOWING SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON THE MESSAGE IN WHICH DEPT PROPOSES THE ABOLITION OF TWO POSITIONS AT THIS EMBASSY.

2. THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOME MISTAKE IN IDENTIFYING POSITION 20-057 FOR ABOLITION SINCE THAT IS THE POSITION OF THE EMBASSY'S COMMERCIAL ATTACHE. PERHAPS IT WAS INTENDED TO RECOMMEND THE ABOLITION OF POSITION 20-177, THE ONLY OTHER OFFICER POSITION IN THE COMMERCIAL UNIT. THE ABOLITION OF EITHER OF THESE COMMERCIAL OFFICER POSITIONS WOULD BE VERY SHORT-SIGHTED AND EMBASSY WOULD RECOMMEND AGAINST IT. EVEN WITH THE STAFFING WE NOW HAVE, THE COMMERCIAL UNIT HAS BEEN UNABLE TO PERFORM DESK STUDIES RECENTLY REQUESTED BY COMMERCE. ONE OFFICER, EVEN IF UNUSUALLY PRODUCTIVE AND EXPERIENCED, COULD DO LITTLE MORE THAN MANAGE A BARE MINIMUM COMMERCIAL FUNCTION. HE WOULD, FOR EXAMPLE, BE UNABLE TO UTILIZE THE MINI-TRADE CENTER FACILITY, THE FOR WHICH HAS JUST ARRIVED IN ISRAEL. OF EVEN MORE IMPORTANCE, SUCH A REDUCTION WOULD NOT PERMIT US TO HONOR OUR COMMITMENT, EXPRESSLY STATED IN THE U.S./ISRAEL JOINT COMMITTEE UNDERSTANDING, TO EXPAND TRADE AND INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES. REDUCTION OF OUR COMMERCIAL OFFICER STRENGTH WOULD BE INTERPRETED BY THE UNCLASSIFIED

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ISRAELIS AS ANOTHER INDICATION OF LOW U.S. INTEREST IN TRADE AND

INVESTMENT IN ISRAEL. THE SIZE OF THE MARKET AND ITS POTENTIAL JUSTIFY TWO COMMERCIAL OFFICER POSITIONS. U.S. NON-MILITARY EXPORTS TO ISRAEL WILL EXCEED \$1 BILLION THIS YEAR. OUR SHARE OF THE MARKET, HOWEVER, IS ONLY 22 PERCENT AND IT IS CERTAIN THAT OUR MAINTENANCE OF THIS SHARE, LET ALONE INCREASING IT, WILL REQUIRE EXTRA EFFORT AND ATTENTION AS THE RESULT OF ISRAEL'S NEW FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THEEC. OUR CURRENT COMMERCIAL WORKLOAD INCLUDES: 101 WTDR'S AND 31 AGENT DISTRIBUTION SERVICE REPORTS OVER THE LAST FOUR MONTHS; ABOUT 100 TRADE OPPORTUNITY REPORTS EACH YEAR; AT LEAST TWO MAJOR DESK STUDIES EACH YEAR; VARIOUS CERPT REPORTING; NOT TO MENTION THE CARE AND FEEDING OF SOME 400 BUSINESS VISITORS ANNUALLY.

3. AMBASSADOR HAS NOT USED A STAFF ASSISTANT ON A FULL-TIME BASIS, ALTHOUGH THE INCUMBENT HAS BEEN EXTREMELY USEFUL IN HANDLING A NUMBER OF HIGH-LEVEL VISITS, OF WHICH WE GET MORE THAN OUR SHARE (AND ELECTION YEAR WILL BRING NO SURCEASE IN THIS REGARD). THEREFORE AMBASSADOR IS PREPARED TO GO ALONG WITH YOUR PROPOSAL THAT THIS POSITION BE ABOLISHED. EMBASSY HOPES, HOWEVER, THAT TEL AVIV COULD BE FAVORABLY CONSIDERED FOR ONE OF THE CENTRAL COMPLEMENT POSITIONS TO BE USED FOR ROTATION OF NEW OFFICERS. WE COULD GIVE THEM EXCELLENT TRAINING HERE AND WOULD WELCOME AN EXTRA HAND TO HELP WITH SENATORS, CONGRESSMEN AND OTHER VISITING FIREMEN.

4. IN SUM, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS (A) THE RETENTION OF THE COMMERICAL POSITION, (B) THE ABOLITION OF THE STAFF ASSISTANT POSITION, AND (C) A CENTRAL COMPLEMENT POSITION FOR TEL AVIV.
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